



Somaliland Update / October 2020

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your families are safe and healthy at this challenging time.

As the coronavirus pandemic remains a challenge for countries large and small around the world, the Government of Somaliland continues its efforts to impede the spread of COVID-19. The health and safety of our citizens remain Somaliland's top priority, which is why we will continue to make the case for our inclusion in international governing bodies such as the World Health Organization.

At the same time, we have not allowed the pandemic to deter efforts to build partnerships with other like-minded nations. As highlighted below, Somaliland opened a representative office in Taipei last month after establishing formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan earlier this year. We hope that as our partnership with Taiwan grows, so too will our ties with the United States as we continue to promote our shared values of democracy, free market economics and peaceful relations with our neighbors.

I hope you find useful this issue of the Somaliland Mission's newsletter, which features a number of significant developments for our country and the region. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like further information about these or other issues.

Warm regards,

Bashir Goth



Somaliland opens representative office in Taiwan

On September 9, Somaliland opened a representative office in Taiwan as the two governments cement their “very special relationship” and begin coordination on issues such as trade, security and development. The process of formalizing relations began when Somaliland Foreign Minister Yasin Hagi Mohamoud signed a bilateral agreement in Taipei on February 26. Upon the announcement of diplomatic ties in July, Taiwan’s Foreign Minister Joseph Wu noted that both countries face external pressures but are “proud of [their] sovereignty and [are] ready to defend it.” Somaliland’s representative to Taipei, Mohamed Hagi, stated that the two countries are “members of the same community of democracies founded by our shared political and economic freedoms, as well as international values.” With regard to these developments, *The Economist* [noted](#) that like Taiwan, Somaliland “is a country in all but name. It has a government, an army and borders.” Yet also like Taiwan, Somaliland face challenges

from “a larger, dictatorial neighbor which considers it to be part of its own territory.”
[Read more.](#)



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation meets with Czech officials and business leaders

Earlier this month, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Liban Yousuf Osman traveled to the Czech Republic for a series of meetings with government officials from Prague’s Ministries of Defense, Justice, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, during which both sides discussed the strengthening of economic and defense ties. The Deputy Minister also met with business leaders looking to invest in Somaliland while in Prague. The two countries will continue to engage on areas of mutual national interest, with both also sharing a close relationship with Taiwan. [Read more.](#)

Inside Somaliland 



Election bill approved by House of Elders

Earlier this month, Somaliland's House of Elders [voted to approve](#) a new election bill, a critical step that includes a voter registration process for the upcoming local and parliamentary elections. President Muse Bihi Abdi welcomed the legislation's approval, which followed extensive debate, and Somaliland's electoral commission [indicated](#) that it is prepared to hold the upcoming parliamentary elections in May 2021. [Read more.](#)



Somaliland's first-ever Health and Demographic Survey provides insights on health trends in women and children

Somaliland's Minister of Planning and National Development Hassan Mohamed Ali and Minister of Health Development Omar Ali Abdillahi recently announced the release of the "[Somaliland Health and Demographic Survey \(SLHDS\) Report 2020](#)," which provides lawmakers, government agencies and the healthcare sector with vital information on the health and lives of Somaliland's women and children. Over 20,000 urban, rural, and nomadic households spanning across Somaliland's six regions were surveyed between 2018 and 2019 thanks to support from the United Nations Population Fund and the governments of Sweden, Finland, Italy and Switzerland. The report includes data on housing, household characteristics, health, education, marriage, fertility, birth spacing, employment, water and sanitation, chronic diseases, and women and children's nutrition. UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia/Somaliland Adam Abdelmoula applauded the major development, saying, "It has been a pleasure for us to witness the Somaliland Government roll out a survey of this scale – that is a rich source of such diverse and crucial information." He added, "The SLHDS report will help the international community to define and shape humanitarian and development strategies, and emergency responses so they are more effective." [Read more](#).

Somaliland to establish national park in Geed-Deeble in effort to preserve wildlife

President Bihi recently approved plans to establish a national park north of Hargeisa in Geed-Deeble to serve as a wildlife refuge. In early October, Ministry of Environment and Rural Development Director General Abdinasir Ahmed Hirsi traveled to the region to inspect a forest park that will serve as a site for the national park. The Government of Somaliland is working with the Honorable Stuart Brown, head of the United Kingdom's mission to Somaliland, along with the African Parks Network and the Cheetah

Conservation Fund to protect local endangered species from poachers and smugglers.
[Read more.](#)



Combatting climate change and COVID-19 in Somaliland

As climate change continues to contribute to devastating weather patterns that result in droughts, floods and locust swarms in the Horn of Africa, efforts by Somaliland and its partners to provide access to water have also helped combat COVID-19. Somaliland's government, with support from the UN Development Program and other international agencies, has been increasing farmers' access to water for drinking, cooking, cleaning and watering livestock. During the global pandemic, water harvesting facilities like the 50,000 cubic meter Baligubadle dam (pictured above) have made water for hand-washing and household cleaning more readily available, in turn slowing the spread of COVID-19. [Read more.](#)

Somaliland is Open for Business 



Trafigura plans oil terminal investment at the Port of Berbera

In September, global commodities trader Trafigura initiated preparations for a major investment in a phased upgrade of the Port of Berbera's oil terminal, delivering its first shipment of gasoil to the port. The company's decision to increase its capacity at Berbera strengthens its position as a gateway to the Horn of Africa region. The first phase of development will include expanding the oil terminal's capacity, with the goal of using the site to import jet fuel and liquified petroleum gas for local and regional use. Trafigura also plans to dredge the berth to allow larger vessels to be received. Somaliland Minister of Trade Mohamoud Hassan Saad told reporters, "We're delighted to be working with a leading independent, international company like Trafigura to improve the quality and reliability of refined petroleum product supply into the country." [Read more.](#)

400-meter expansion of the Port of Berbera completed by DP World

In August, Dubai's DP World completed a 400-meter expansion of the Port of Berbera, which once operational will increase the terminal's capacity by 500,000 twenty-foot cargo containers per year. The company [tweeted](#) that the expansion "will further strengthen Berbera as a major regional trade hub servicing the Horn of Africa."

Completion of the \$442 million project is slated for 2021, but both DP World and Somaliland are already seeing promising results. According to Federico Banos-Linder, Vice President of External Relations at DP World, “Already with phase one of the three phases done, we have increased the container capacity by 50% and pushed volumes by 70%, which is a massive improvement.” For example, Somaliland is “now exporting 4 million livestock from 1.5 million just less than a year ago.” [Read more.](#)

Closing Viewpoints

“How a DIY nation has made it this far”

Christian Science Monitor begins its examination of Somaliland with a question. “What if a poor country was left to develop on its own, without the world’s help? Could it manage? Might it even thrive?” The article provides a history of Somaliland’s independence, union with Somalia, and the unfortunate circumstances that led Somaliland to reassert its independence in 1991. Comparing Somaliland to other countries in the region, the article states, “While Somaliland goes it alone, neighboring Somalia offers a stark illustration of a world where foreign assistance falls short, often seeming driven as much by donors’ interests as locals’ needs.” Deputy Foreign Minister Liban Yousuf Osman states that Somaliland is “a reality in every aspect except recognition,” which the article notes has presented Somaliland with a unique set of challenges to overcome. [Read more.](#)



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